

REMARKS

This is in response to the Final Office Action mailed April 20, 2009 in which claims 1-11 and 14-22 were pending and rejected. With this Amendment, claims 1, 11, and 19 have been amended. All remaining claims are unchanged. In view of the following, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 11, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Alpdemir (U.S. Patent Publ. No. 2002/0035474) in view of Albayrak et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,662,163 – hereinafter “Albayrak”). Claims 7-10, 14-18, and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Alpdemir in view of Albayrak and further in view of Takebayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,357,596 – hereinafter “Takebayashi”).

Aspects described in the present application relate to focusing in a mixed-initiative dialogue (e.g., see paragraph [0238]). For instance, a user may provide many pieces of information in a response. The information can include an answer(s) to a question or prompt as well as additional or extra answer(s). In one embodiment, the system includes a focusing mechanism to process the additional information and can depart from a selected ordering for the controls in the dialog (see e.g., paragraph [0238]-[0241]).

In the rejection of independent claim 1, the Office Action alleges that the cited Alpdemir reference discloses following a selected order of prompting and departing from the selected order when a response includes an answer to a prompt that was given and additional information that is not an answer to the prompt. In particular, the Office Action cites paragraphs [0132] and [0143] – [0144] of Alpdemir. These sections of Alpdemir relate to a system for providing a telephone-based audio recognition system that allows user interaction with a merchant. A database includes merchant information and a series of defined voice commands for retrieving information from the database. As described in paragraphs [0143]-[0144], [0217], and [0226], the system of Alpdemir defines a flow of questions to be answered in order by a user to

interact with the database. The alleged additional information is a help command that a user can invoke. Saying the help command connects the user with “some automated help” (para [0132]). Alpdemir does not describe the “some automated help” in any detail. More importantly, Alpdemir clearly does not disclose that the cited “help” includes providing an additional prompt to the user concerning the additional information as claimed.

Further, nowhere does Alpdemir teach or suggest that the cited “help” includes providing an additional prompt to the user before returning to the selected order as claimed. Again, Alpdemir only states that “some automated help” is provided and does not disclose the manner in which the help is provided. For instance, in describing the script that is used for the consumer calls (see paragraphs [0253] – [0338]), Alpdemir does not provide any discussion of how the “help” is provided. For example, the script illustrated in the cited sections of Alpdemir (i.e., para [0253] – [0338]) shows an order of prompts and answers but does not mention a help command or how a help command is handled in the script. Alpdemir simply does not disclose a response that includes the alleged additional information (i.e., the “help” command) where the system provides a prompt before returning to the alleged selected order (i.e., the script order shown in para [0250]-[0338]).

In asserting that Alpdemir discloses an additional prompt and returning to a selected order as claimed, page 5 of the Office Action alleges that para [0132], [0250]-[0338] and FIG. 5 show examples “illustrating prompt and response in a dialog environment, that can start a user’s dialog over again.” Applicant respectfully disagrees with this characterization of Alpdemir. For instance, the script illustrated in these sections of Alpdemir does not mention “help” or a prompt issued for the cited “help.” Alpdemir does not discuss the manner in which the help is provided, and does not appear to teach or suggest “starting a dialog” over in response to the “help” as alleged by the Office Action. More importantly, Alpdemir does not teach or suggest returning to a selected order as claimed.

Moreover, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to recite “wherein the dialog follows the selected order of prompting and receiving input from a user as related to the order of the controls to obtain values for fields of a form” and “wherein an additional prompt is

then provided to the user concerning the additional information to obtain a value for at least one field of the form before returning to the selected order.” Applicant respectfully notes that support for these amendments can be found in the specification, for example, at page 68, line 24 – page 73, line 30 and page 76, line 1 – page 83, line 11. Alpdemir only discloses that the cited “help” command provides “some automated help.” The help command is not an additional prompt provided to the user to obtain a value for a field of a form. Albayak also does not disclose these features.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is neither taught, suggested, nor rendered obvious by the cited references and is in allowable form.

Regarding independent claims 11 and 19, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of these claims on pages 5-7 of the Office Action does not address each and every feature recited in the claims. Instead, the Office Action combines the rejections of claims 1, 11, and 19, but only addresses the particular language of claim 1; the Office Action does not address the particular language of claims 11 and 19. The Office Action therefore does not provide a detailed analysis of the rejection of claims 11 or 19. In order to make the basis for the rejection more clear, Applicant requests that the Examiner provide a detailed explanation of the basis for the rejection of claims 11 and 19 indicating an identification of the references that correspond to each of the elements, and an explanation of how the claim elements are being interpreted such that they read on the identified corresponding elements. Applicant respectfully believes that such detail is essential to properly understanding the Examiner’s position and to narrow issues for appeal.

With regard to independent claim 11, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references at least do not teach or suggest, either separately or in combination, a dialog that follows a selected order of question controls to obtain values for fields of a form wherein an additional prompt is provided for a question control departing from the selected order where the selected order is returned to after the user has provided an answer to the additional prompt. As similarly discussed above, Alpdemir discloses a help command that is selected by a user to get

“some automated help.” Alpdemir does not teach or suggest that the “some automated help” includes an additional prompt for a question control associated with a field of a form.

Moreover, Alpdemir also does not teach or suggest returning to a selected order of question control after a user has answered an additional prompt. Further, Applicant has amended independent claim 11 to specifically recite that creating a dialog comprises providing a first prompt for a first question control in the selected order, the first question control being associated with a first field of the form, and receiving a user response that includes an answer to the first prompt. The user response includes additional information that is not an answer to the first prompt and is associated with one or more of the semantic items. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 11 is neither taught, suggested, nor rendered obvious by the cited references and is in allowable form.

With regard to independent claim 19, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references do not teach or suggest, either separately or in combination, following a selected order until a response is received that includes additional information that is not an answer to a prompt that was given. For instance, the cited Alpdemir reference discloses a help command that allows a user to access “some automated help.” The help command is not an additional prompt provided for additional information received from a user where the additional prompt is provided to obtain, from the user, a value for a field of a form.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 19 is neither taught, suggested, nor rendered obvious by the cited references and is in allowable form.

Additionally, Applicant respectfully submits that related dependent claims 2-10, 14-18, and 20-22 are also in allowable form at least based on their relation to independent claims 1, 11, and 19, discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the application is requested.

The foregoing remarks are intended to assist the Office in examining the application and in the course of explanation may employ shortened or more specific or variant descriptions of some of the claim language. Such descriptions are not intended to limit the scope

of the claims; the actual claim language should be considered in each case. Furthermore, the remarks are not to be considered exhaustive of the facets of the invention which are rendered patentable, being only examples of certain advantageous features and differences, which applicant's attorney chooses to mention at this time. For the foregoing reasons, applicant reserves the right to submit additional evidence showing the distinction between applicant's invention to be unobvious in view of the prior art.

Furthermore, in commenting on the references and in order to facilitate a better understanding of the differences that are expressed in the claims, certain details of distinction between the same and the present invention have been mentioned, even though such differences do not appear in all of the claims. It is not intended by mentioning any such unclaimed distinctions to create any implied limitations in the claims.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

MICROSOFT CORPORATION

By: \_\_\_\_\_ /Christopher J. Volkmann/  
Christopher J. Volkmann, Reg. No. 60,349  
One Microsoft Way  
Redmond, WA 98052-6399  
Phone: (425) 707-9382

SMK:CVJ:lah